



RAVALLI COUNTY ATTORNEY

205 Bedford Street, Suite C, HAMILTON, MT 59840-2853
Phone (406) 375-6750 Fax (406) 375-6731

Memorandum

RECEIVED

TO: Ravalli County Commissioners

MAR 18 2009

FROM: George Corn, Ravalli County Attorney

Ravalli County Commissioners

RE: Resolution of Support for Montana wood products industry (HB 645)

DATE: March 18, 2009

As you may be aware, Senators Baucus and Tester encouraged Governor Schweitzer to recommend to the Legislature a portion of the funds from the Federal Jobs bill be used to establish a revolving loan fund to help preserve our wood products industry in Montana. As you know the industry is experiencing extremely tough-going in the current economy. Governor Schwietzer, recognizing the importance of the industry, readily agreed to the appropriateness of the request and proposed to the Legislature that a revolving loan fund be established in the Department of Commerce for that purpose. Although the bill has excellent prospects it has not yet been passed by the Legislature. I believe as presently written, the bill proposes a revolving fund of ten million dollars be made available for loans to businesses in the wood products industry. This financing option would do much to help businesses in the industry survive these dire economic times.

Because of the importance of our local wood product industry here in Ravalli County, I am encouraging you to pass a resolution supporting this bill. The maintenance of the industry and it's infrastructure is critically important to Ravalli County in three principle ways. First, it is necessary to enable us to fireproof our communities with projects such as the Middle East Fork. Second, it is also necessary for Federal and State agencies in Ravalli County to properly manage those portions of the forest devoted to timber production. Finally (and in no way last), the industry provides good jobs that are important to Ravalli County's economy and families.

In encouraging you to pass a resolution of support, I point out that the bill proposes a loan, not a handout. I also point out the terrible situation the County, and indeed western Montana, would be in if we lose the infrastructure necessary to maintain our forest lands.

For these reasons I hope you will pass a Resolution supporting the bill and notify our legislators of the same. Thank you for your anticipated support of this important legislation.

GHC:hs